Auction of Bidi Tobacco

735. SHRI GUNDAPPA KORWAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to arrange for auction for buying of bidi tobacco for the benefit of tobacco farmers;

(b) whether such suggestion has been made to Government; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government to this proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (c) Some representations regarding setting up of tobacco auction centres in the State of Gujarat for buying of bidi tobacco for the benefit of tobacco farmers have been received by the Tobacco Board. Tabacco Board establishes platforms for auction of Virginia tobacco grown by the registered growers. In accordance with the provisions of the Tobacco Board Act, only Virginia tobacco growers are registered by the Board.

Building of Panchayat Level Food Security System

736. DR. MAHESH CHANDRA SHARMA: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether Conference on Panchayati Raj-Key to food security and nutrition organised by division of international cooperation of the Agriculture Ministry in Association with Food & Agriculture Organisation was held recently in New Delhi;

(b) if so, the details of discussions and outcome thereof;

(c) whether FAO of United Nations offered any financial and technical assistance to India to build up Panchayats level food security system as reported in the Hindustan Times dated 3rd July, 1996; and

(d) if so, the details thereof, and the likely share to be given to Rajasthan State?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) The Conference on Panchayati Raj-the Key to Food Security and Nutrition-was organised on July 2-3, 1996 at New Delhi by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Indian Association for the Advancement of Science, Indian Farmers Fertilizers Cooperative and the UN inter-agency group in India.

(b) The recommendations made by the Conference are given in the Statement *(See below)*

(c) and (d) A pilot project to test which extent the Panchayati Raj System could be used as a delivery instrument at the village level for higher food production and food security for the poor was prepared and proposed by the Planning Commission and forwarded to the FAO by the Ministry of Agriculture in January, 1996. FAO's approval for the project is yet to be received.

Statement

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The World Food Summit provides an opportunity for seeking commitment for global action to fight hunger and maluntrition and to ensure Food Security for All. The Summit should clearly bring cut that different approaches are required for food security for the urban poor and the rural poor in the developing countries. The summit should also focus on food security for the vulnerable groups, and woman and child, with particular mention of breast-feeding and supplementary foods.

2. The Panchayats and local self government institutions can play crucial role in ensuring household level Food and Nutrition Security in India, as laid down in the National Nutrition Policy of 1995 and the National Plan of Action on

Nutrition of 1993. This calls for Central and State Governments to undertake following steps:

(i) Empower Panchayats (and local self government institutions) with suitable allocation of financial resources to implement the programme of Food Security; and legislate land reforms for different situations.

(ii) Ensure effective involvement of all people, women and men, indecisions and actions that affect their food security, whereever appropriate by promoting cooperatives and NGOs.

(iii) Build capabilities in Panchayats for: (i) micro (village) level planning for Food Security, and (ii) implementation of the plans at village level through involvement of elected members, NGOs. cooperatives and local entrepreneurs. Elected women members may be called upon to play a predominant role.

(iv) Education and training of elected representatives and functionaries of Panchayats and local self government institutions, and NGOs be emphasised with the focus on sustainable food productivity through micro-level planning and implementation.

(v) Nutrition awareness creation should be made an integral part of various sectoral programmes with a veiw to ensure household and intra household food security.

(vi) Develop appropriate cost effective Research, Development and Demonstration measures aimed at building/improving skills of small and marginal farmers and workers, from all sectors of agriculture including cereals, fruits and vegetables, fisheries, poultry and animal husbandry, and leading to sustain able production. The emphasis should be on technology for improving agricultural productivity of rainfed agriculture and artisanal fisheries.

(vii) Develop appropriate (non-technical) measures to improve skills relating to managerial, operational, maintenance and marketing to effect better returns from available local resources and produce.

(viii) Promote local off-farm income/empioyment generation activities to improve purchasing power of the rural poor, especially the artisans and landless labour.

3. A formal Agreement for creating Micro Level Planning Capacity in Panchayats through assistance by the UN agencies is to be established, preferably on the World Food Day, 1996 i.e. October 16, 1996.

3.1 The UN Inter Agency Group will consider ways and means to strengthen the Planning capabilities of the Panchayati Raj at district and block levels, by utilising the existing NICNET hardware and software infrastructure and manpower. Whereas NICNET is in the process of expanding its network from district to block level through own resources, this opportunity should be utilised to train atleast two persons at each block level in micro level planning process. This will call for training atleast 12000 persons from 6,000 development blocks in the country in one year.

3.2 A Working Group may be set up to develop the Programme Outline on Training for Micro Level Planning, to be considered for funding under the UN Programme on Food Security and Nutrition.

Worker's Retrenchment Under Exit Policy

737. MAULANA OBAIDULLAH KHAN AZMI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) number of workers retrenched under Exit Policy of Union Government by the end of June, 1996;